



How can service learning make a critical impact in schools and community partnerships while creating engaged learners and responsible citizens in middle schools?

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Summary

The purpose of this study is to determine the effects of the implementation of quality service-learning programs in science on academic measures, civic responsibility, and resilience in students who are at-risk in 20 middle schools in Alabama and Georgia. The study included over 5000 sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students who live in high poverty areas in Alabama and Georgia (at least 50% qualify for free and/or reduced lunch) and over 100 of their science teachers and over 120 community partners.

The study used a quantitative comparative design that included treatment groups who implemented quality service-learning programs and comparison groups that did not. The instruments employed in this study included the *Learn and Serve America: Academic Engagement Student Survey* (Grades 6-12), the *Learn and Serve America: Civic Engagement Student Survey* (Grades 6-12), and the *Learn and Serve America: Resiliency Student Survey* (Grades 6-12).

Preliminary results show gains for improving resilience in students who are at-risk for dropping out of school. Ongoing professional development and technical assistance for teachers throughout the three years were critical components to the success of the project. Teachers learned and applied STEM-based state-of-the-art methods for teaching science (problem-based, inquiry-based learning), the integration of complementary higher-order creative and critical thinking skills, networking with other professionals through professional learning communities, the integration of relevant technology, and standards-based service-learning strategies.

This study is aligned with IARSLCE's 2012 Conference theme of "Connected Knowing" by extending the knowledge base and sharing the practice of implementing exemplary programs that incorporate quality service-learning. Additionally, it suggests that standards can result in quality outcomes and serve as exemplars for other schools to create high quality programs of their own.

References

There were no references provided with this proposal.